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《 論 説 》

## Initiatives to promote internationalization in Japanese higher education:

Prospects and difficulties encountered during the creation of an intensive course in Education, Development and Peace in cooperation with partners from the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø

James Daniel Short

This paper discusses the course of events which led to two developments that represent meaningful contributions towards the internationalization of the Faculty of Law at Toyo University, and lessons that have been learned as a result of these endeavours. The first development was the signing of an Agreement for Academic Cooperation with the Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education at the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø (UiT) in May 2014; the second was the delivery of an intensive course in Education, Development and Peace for students of both Toyo University and UiT in Tromsø in February - March 2017. With a view to providing insights into the facilitation of similar activities in other educational contexts, particularly with regard to Japanese universities and their external academic partners, the paper identifies factors that were beneficial to the achievement of the overall educational objective and also stumbling blocks that arose which complicated the process.

### 1 . Background: Japanese universities facing serious challenges

In a hard-hitting article published in the prestigious magazine of the American Council on Foreign Relations *Foreign Affairs* in October 2016, Devin Stewart a Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs describes a picture of

Japanese universities that are facing something of an existential crisis<sup>(1)</sup>. Despite repeated efforts on the part of the central government and some enterprising university decision makers over the course of a number of years to bring about major reform in Japan's higher education sector, wide-ranging surveys of the quality of education delivered by universities around the world such as that carried out by the Times Higher Education of London have revealed that even Japan's ostensibly elite institutions are in reality far from being ranked as among the world's best. In particular, Stewart draws attention to the fact that according to the most recent data, in 2016 Japan's historically most august educational institution, the University of Tokyo, lost its position as the highest ranked university in Asia; it has now been surpassed by universities in Singapore, mainland China and Hong Kong<sup>(2)</sup>. Stewart identifies a number of factors that have contributed towards this apparent institutional malaise, many of which will come as little or no surprise to both practitioners within and external observers who are well-acquainted with the overall state of Japanese higher education: marked reductions in university budgets, a poor overall quality of research and a lack of a sufficiently global outlook. Contributing to the third factor is the fact that Japanese universities are not being seen as particularly attractive places to study by students from other countries due to the fact that they offer only a limited range of courses in English and have relatively few Japanese teaching staff who are highly conversant in the language. In addition, in comparison to other OECD countries, fewer Japanese students are embarking upon overseas study<sup>(3)</sup> and, despite undergoing six years of compulsory English education, have overall levels of English language proficiency, particularly regarding speaking ability, that are noticeably inferior to their counterparts from other

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(1) Stewart, D. (2016), *Japan Gets Schooled - Why the Country's Universities are Failing*, Foreign Affairs magazine; <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2016-10-31/japan-gets-schooled>

(2) Times Higher Education World University Rankings, *Asia University Rankings 2017*, online document; [https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2017/regional-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort\\_by/rank/sort\\_order/asc/cols/stats](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2017/regional-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats)

countries in East Asia such as South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

It goes without saying that these less than encouraging trends in Japanese higher education are taking place within a broader national context in which Japan as a country is struggling to come to terms with the weighty inter-generational pressures of a shrinking population and a rapidly aging society. It is likely that the first of these is already exerting a significant influence on decision making within the country's 775 universities since the declining pool of potential incoming students will be placing increasing pressure on recruitment. In order to address this, universities are making efforts to strengthen their individual profiles, diversify the curricula and educational opportunities that they offer and in some cases consider accepting applicants of a weaker academic calibre than would hitherto have been acceptable. In these circumstances, despite the fact that Japan's economy retains its position as the world's third largest, it can be argued that Japanese universities are far from leading the pack in Asia and rather are actually falling behind those of their neighbours in the region.

It is not in doubt that this situation is well understood by governmental decision makers who have in recent years launched a series of major initiatives to address it. One of these was the Global 30 Project which ran from 2009 - 2014 in which thirteen of the country's top universities received substantial additional funds from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The principal aim of this initiative was to double the number of foreign students coming to Japan by means of significantly increasing the number of academic programmes available in English at these universities; a secondary aim was to increase the number of foreign faculty teaching at them. This project achieved a measure of success in terms of attracting a greater number of foreign students to the universities that received extra funds;

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(3) Sandhu, A. (2015), *Japan launches multimillion dollar program to internationalize university education*, in *Internationalization of University Education in Japan*, sponsored supplement to Science magazine, March 2015, p. 2 (1492);  
[http://www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/Global\\_Japanese\\_Univ\\_19mar15.pdf](http://www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/Global_Japanese_Univ_19mar15.pdf)

however, in terms of promoting a broader global outlook across the higher education sector as a whole, in the eyes of comparative education expert Shingo Ashizawa it has proved largely unsuccessful. Interviewed by Stewart for the *Foreign Relations* article, Ashizawa stated: “....the Global 30 Project only created isolated, one-off ‘island projects’ rather than systemic change in the broader curriculum. It was therefore deemed a total failure<sup>(4)</sup>.”

In 2014 MEXT replaced the Global 30 Project with a new programme predicated on a larger scale, the Top Global University Project, in which a total of 37 universities were allocated additional funds for a longer period of ten years. These universities were categorised into two types, Type A and Type B: Type A (Top Type) universities were the same elite institutions that were the recipients of the funds provided under the former initiative and which received a greater share of the overall budget allocation under the new scheme; Type B (Global Traction Type) universities were 24 less prestigious institutions which over the course of a protracted application process succeeded in demonstrating their potential to become academic centres with a strong international profile<sup>(5)</sup>. Over and above the aims of the Global 30 Project of bringing more foreign students to Japan, increasing the number of courses taught in English and providing greater opportunities for Japanese students to study abroad, the Top Global University Project was implemented with the explicit intention of reversing the trend of Japan’s elite institutions slipping down international ranking tables. In concrete terms, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated that as a result of the initiative his government hoped that ten Japanese universities would improve their academic rankings sufficiently in order that they could be listed among the world’s top 100 academic institutions within ten years<sup>(6)</sup>. In principle, the funds of the new initiative were

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(4) Shingo Ashizawa, quoted in Foreign Affairs article, (2016).

(5) Shimmi, Y. & Yonezawa, A. (2015), *Japan’s “Top Global University” Project*, International Higher Education, no. 81, p. 27.

targeted at the following four priorities: i) increasing the number of non-Japanese teaching staff or Japanese nationals who have graduated from foreign universities; ii) establishing more curricula for undergraduate degree programmes in English; iii) providing financial support for incoming foreign students; and iv) recruiting students from countries worldwide.

At the time of writing, the Top Global University Project (hereafter referred to as TGUP) has been in operation for a little over three years<sup>(7)</sup> and as a consequence it is likely too early to judge whether it will deliver the significant results hoped for by governmental decision makers<sup>(8)</sup>. When questioned about his predictions for the success of TGUP, Ashizawa stated that in general he was more optimistic about the prospects for TGUP than for its predecessor<sup>(9)</sup>. However, with regard to its impacts on the micro scale, that is to say on the scale of one of the universities selected for the initiative, which are themselves clearly influenced by the aforementioned wider trends taking place in Japanese higher education as a whole, in his position as a faculty member of one of the selected universities the author finds himself in a position to offer some relevant observations regarding this situation.

## 2. Internationalization within the Faculty of Law, Toyo University

‘Internationalization’ is a term which is notoriously difficult to define. It is utilised in a number of contexts, including in the business world, the world of entertainment and in education amongst others, and it would be fair to say that there is no single definition

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- (6) Statements of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe paraphrased and quoted in: Taylor, V. (2014), *Japanese universities reach for global status*, East Asia Forum, online article; <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/12/30/japanese-universities-reach-for-global-status/>; also Kakuchi, S. (2014), *Not just international but ‘Super Global Universities’*, University World News, online article; <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20141120233337379>
- (7) Commencing in fiscal 2014, the Top Global Project is due to run until the end of fiscal year 2023.
- (8) Sandhu (2015), op.cit., p. 3 (1493).
- (9) Ashizawa quoted in Foreign Affairs article, (2016), op. cit.

that applies to all of these different contexts. A related difficulty arises with regard to internationalization in terms of the specific phenomena that are the focus of a particular initiative or discussion. For example, the term can refer to an intangible thing such as a group of people's attitudes and general outlook; alternatively, it can refer to the business practices of a particular company within a specific geographical context; or it can refer to the makeup of personnel within a particular institution. In the discussion in this paper 'internationalization' is taken to mean tangible steps that are being taken towards achieving one or more of the ten common performance indicators for this goal that are stipulated by MEXT for all of the 37 universities that have been selected for the TGUP. These indicators are as follows:

- 1 . Increase the number of full-time foreign faculty and Japanese faculty who received their degrees from foreign universities.
- 2 . Increase the ratio of international students in the total student population.
- 3 . Increase the ratio of students who have earned credits at foreign universities in the total Japanese student population.
- 4 . Increase the number of students sent abroad under inter-university agreements.
- 5 . Increase the number of subjects taught in foreign languages.
- 6 . Increase the number of students enrolled in degree courses conducted in foreign languages only.
- 7 . Increase the number of students who meet the standards of proficiency in foreign languages.
- 8 . Develop English syllabi.
- 9 . Increase the number of Japanese students living in international dormitories.
10. Adopt a flexible academic calendar (introduce a quarter system on a university-wide basis <sup>(10) (11)</sup>).

It is the author's contention that the two developments which form the main focus of the discussion in this paper represent steps that contribute towards the achievement of the common performance indicators for internationalization numbered 2, 3 and 4 in the

list above. In order to elucidate the reasons behind this contention, an explanation is required of the background situation within the Faculty of Law with regard to internationalization.

To a large extent, it is generally accepted by the teaching staff of the Faculty of Law at Toyo University that the majority of students who enter the faculty do so for the reason that following graduation they wish to seek employment within Japan as public or civil servants, in Japanese *koumuin* (公務員). Such employment could take the form of becoming an official within the public administration of a town or city government, or following receipt of additional training, becoming a member of one of the emergency services. It goes without saying that a first degree from a law faculty can represent a significant milestone on a career path leading to a variety of destinations; however, in the Toyo University case, for the incoming cohort of first grade students the wish ultimately to become a public servant represents a strong motivation for many. The core undergraduate curriculum of the faculty is centred around the six standard pillars of Japanese legal study - the *Roppo* (六法), Constitutional Law, Civil Law, Criminal Law, Commercial Law, Civil Procedural Law and Criminal Procedural Law, and this content provides a valuable grounding of understanding which is beneficial for those students who subsequently wish to take the national examination that will enable them to become public servants. Consequently, regarding a course of study which lends itself relatively smoothly towards the attainment of an employment goal that is held by a large number of students, the curriculum is very sound. However, in comparison to the curricula taught in other faculties within Toyo University, for example within the faculties of Economics, Business Administration or Regional Development Studies, within the broader

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(10) In addition to performance indicators for internationalization, MEXT has also stipulated specific indicators for governance and educational reform. MEXT, Top Global University Japan, *Top Global University Project*, online document, n.d.; <https://tgu.mext.go.jp/en/about/index.html>

(11) Shimmi & Yonezawa (2015), op. cit., pp. 27–8.



aforementioned drive towards the internationalization of Japanese higher education as a whole, it can be argued that it does not lend itself so easily to this trend. To put this another way, it is not a straightforward task to 'internationalize' an undergraduate legal curriculum which is quite naturally centred on study of the Japanese *Roppo*. This dynamic has been well understood by faculty members for several years and as a consequence, alternative strategies have been implemented with the intention of strengthening the faculty's international credentials.

Following Toyo University's selection by MEXT to become one of the 24 Type B universities under the TGUP, the incentive to promote internationalization within the faculty took on added importance. The reason for this is that over the course of the TGUP the 37 selected universities as whole institutions and also the faculties within them are obliged to attain a number of statistically measurable benchmarks in order to continue to receive the additional funds for the whole ten year period; these benchmarks include, for example, achieving measurable progress in line with the common performance indicators for internationalization mentioned above. Therefore prior to Toyo's selection for the TGUP and to a greater extent following it, the faculty has been seeking to promote internationalization in appropriate ways, given the restrictions that exist vis-à-vis its core curriculum.

In line with this thinking, in recent years what specific steps have been taken?<sup>(12)</sup> Firstly, in 2008, 2010 and 2016 tenured faculty members were appointed from the countries of South Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom and China<sup>(13)</sup>. Secondly, in line with the university-wide curriculum revision that takes place every four years, in 2012 and 2016 a number of new courses were opened that are taught in English, including courses in International Politics, International Law and the author's

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(12) In this discussion the author is not seeking to suggest that the list of initiatives presented here represents a comprehensive summary of all initiatives taken within the faculty to promote internationalization during the last few years.

(13) The tenured faculty member from the United Kingdom is the author.

subject of speciality Fundamental Concepts of Peace Studies. Thirdly, over and above the continued teaching of four foreign languages (English, Chinese, German and French), since August 2013 and February 2015 respectively overseas intensive courses in English pronunciation and German language have been created and led by faculty members in London and Munich during the summer and winter vacations. Furthermore, in accordance with a policy applied across the university as a whole since 2016, as part of the application process for new teaching staff, all candidates have been required to demonstrate their spoken English ability in a demonstration class environment due to the fact that they may be required to deliver courses in their field of specialization in English at a later date.

As stated in the preamble to this paper, the author holds that the two developments carried out in partnership with the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø in 2014 and 2017 represent additional meaningful contributions towards the internationalization of the faculty. The discussion in the following sections describes the sequence of events by which these developments came about.

### 3. Establishing links with the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø (UiT)

Following the author's appointment as a tenured member of the Faculty of Law in April 2010 he began investigating opportunities to establish formal links with an educational institution outside Japan in the field of Peace Studies. This process gained momentum after November 2011 when the faculty granted approval for the opening of a new course in the field entitled Fundamental Concepts of Peace Studies which began in April 2012 as part of the revised curriculum that came into effect in that year. In accordance with the overall stance of the faculty vis-à-vis the promotion of internationalization in directions which proceed outside of but in parallel with the core legal curriculum, since his appointment the author has received considerable encouragement from senior colleagues to pursue initiatives of this nature<sup>(14)</sup>.

Consequently, formal interactions between Toyo University and the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø (hereafter referred to as UiT) took place for the first time in September 2012; however, personal contacts between the author and colleagues from UiT were established prior to that time.

The author first learned of UiT and in particular the Centre for Peace Studies within the university from a colleague at his previous place of employment, the Hiroshima Office of the United Nations Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR), Mr. Gunnar Rekvig in 2007. Rekvig, a Norwegian national whose hometown was Tromsø, had previously earned a Master's degree from the Centre for Peace Studies (hereafter CPS) at UiT. Common interests thus established with Rekvig, following developments in the author's career which brought him into the Faculty of Law at Toyo University, through Rekvig he sought to investigate the opportunity to establish formal links between Toyo and UiT in the field of Peace Studies. This endeavour led to an introduction to Rekvig's former academic supervisor Professor Vidar Vambheim who was one of the architects of the creation of the CPS in 2002 and one of its leading professors. Having made contact with Vambheim during the early part of 2012, the author was invited to visit the CPS in September of that year; during that visit discussions were held regarding the possibility of establishing formal links between Toyo and UiT, with a view ultimately to signing an academic cooperation agreement between the two universities.

The timing of the first meeting with Vambheim in September 2012 proved serendipitous due to the fact that he made it known that he would soon be visiting

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(14) The author would like to take the opportunity to express his gratitude to senior professors within the Faculty of Law who have supported his efforts to establish international links with colleagues at the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø and for other international projects over a number of years. In particular, the author would like to express his thanks to the former Deans of the Law Faculty Professor Takahide Goto and Professor Masaki Sakuramoto; also to Professor Toyomi Takahashi and the current Dean Professor Takaya Inoue.

Japan to meet colleagues at another academic institution, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), with which UiT was already in negotiations to conclude an academic agreement. Vambheim stated that he would be willing to visit Toyo during his stay in Tokyo and hold discussions with senior university staff. Consequently, he visited Toyo for the first time in November 2012 and held discussions pertaining to the future signing of an academic cooperation agreement with former Dean of the Faculty of Law Professor Masaki Sakuramoto and former Director of the International Affairs Office Professor Keiichi Nakabachi. Subsequently, after a somewhat protracted administrative process that went back and forth between the two institutions during the course of much of 2013, the proposal to sign an academic agreement between the Faculty of Law at Toyo University and the faculty at UiT of which the CPS was a part, the Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education, was approved by the various decision making bodies within both institutions and finally came into effect in May 2014.

#### 4 . Tangible results produced by the 2014 academic cooperation agreement

The specific activities promoted under the academic cooperation agreement are what may be regarded as standard activities for inter-university agreements of this type which are conducted at the faculty level. Principally, the agreement promotes cooperation in the following areas:

- 1 . Academic research, where the findings of this research may be published in the respective academic journals of either or both institutions.
- 2 . Exchange of teaching faculty in a variety of capacities, including for short or longer term sabbaticals of up to a maximum period of one academic year for research and/or teaching purposes.
- 3 . Exchange of students for specific periods of time up to a maximum period of one academic year, during which students may attend regular courses at the host institution and earn academic credits towards degree qualifications at their home

institution while incurring no additional financial cost.

- 4 . Any other additional activities or projects that are deemed appropriate and are designed and implemented with the full agreement and participation of faculty members from both institutions.

From the start of the interactions between Vambheim and the author beginning in September 2012 it was the intention of both parties ultimately to pursue the establishment of an institutional framework between Toyo and UiT through which cooperation could be facilitated in a number of areas. Thinking was directed towards the facilitation of collaborative research leading towards academic publication, teaching faculty exchange whereby we ourselves and potentially other colleagues could spend extended periods at the partner's institution, and eventually the creation of one or more modules or a longer course in Peace Studies which could be delivered and taught collaboratively, potentially through the utilisation of video-conferencing facilities. It is clear that the cooperation agreement that came into effect in May 2014 provided a sound institutional framework through which progress could be made towards achieving these objectives. On the basis of the agreement, to date a variety of collaborative activities have been carried out, most notable of which is the aforementioned intensive course in Education, Development and Peace for students of both institutions delivered at UiT in February - March 2017, which will be discussed in section 5 below.

Prior to this large-scale initiative, the author visited UiT in January 2015 to investigate the most effective means of operationalizing the agreement, particularly with regard to increasing educational opportunities for UiT students to pursue their studies at Toyo. Subsequently, Vambheim visited Toyo later the same year for further substantive discussions with faculty officials and to deliver a lecture to Toyo students on the subject of the Nordic community and Norwegian peace policy. Thereafter he and the author conducted joint research focusing on the indigenous Ainu population in Nibutani, Hokkaido, following which Vambheim delivered a lecture focusing on

education policy for the indigenous Sami population in northern Norway at Hokkaido University, Sapporo on October 30<sup>th</sup> 2015. In the following year (June 2016), a number of UiT academic and administrative staff visited Japan to participate in the Japan-Norway Arctic Science and Innovation Week organised by the Innovation Norway organisation and the Norwegian Embassy in Tokyo<sup>(15)</sup>. During this event, Vambheim and his colleague Dr. Irene Dahl from the Faculty of Law at UiT took the opportunity to visit Toyo to discuss possible collaborative legal research with a number of law professors, particularly pertaining to the Law of the Sea and the constitutional law of the European Union.

At this juncture, the author wishes to emphasize the importance of what may appear an obvious matter: namely, specific activities that produce tangible results which come about as a result of the signing of academic cooperation agreements between universities. In such a discussion one might pose the question that if such activities were not actually to take place, then what exactly would be the point of involving considerable manpower to conduct protracted negotiations in order to conclude such agreements? This question precisely captures the cogent issue. The reason for this is that in the academic world in recent years (and not solely in Japan) there has been a tendency for academic institutions to expend considerable effort in order to conclude academic agreements with a variety of foreign partners. However, in some cases following the signing of the agreement documents by senior university figures, very few or even no tangible cooperative activities have actually taken place. Therefore in informal parlance some of these agreements have been referred to as mere 'paper agreements' since they exist solely on paper and do not manifest themselves in any actual activities. In keeping with the aforementioned trends affecting higher education throughout Japan, universities that are finding themselves under pressure to attract

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(15) Norway in Japan, (2016), *Japan-Norway Arctic Science and Innovation Week 2016*, online document; <http://injapan.no/arctic2016/>

students in a shrinking market<sup>(16)</sup> are increasingly keen to demonstrate their 'international credentials', and also seek funds from external governmental and private sources. As a result, they strongly advertise the number of academic agreements that they have concluded with academic institutions in other parts of the world. Yet one can pose the following question: are all of these agreements actually in operation and producing tangible results? Prior to the signing of the agreement concluded between Toyo and UiT in May 2014, a senior official at Toyo expressed exactly this concern, emphasizing the importance of stating clearly what specific activities could be expected and, once enacted, ensuring that these activities did actually take place. It goes without saying that the author and his partners at UiT are in full agreement with this contention vis-à-vis the current and future cooperation planned between the two universities; as a consequence, it is expected that a variety of mutually-beneficial activities for both students and academic staff will continue over the coming years.

## 5. Sequence of events leading to the delivery of the intensive course at UiT in February 2017

As has been stated, since their preliminary discussions beginning in September 2012, Professor Vambheim and the author had been exploring potential avenues through which they could develop a collaborative course in Peace Studies for students of both UiT and Toyo. In addition to the facilitation of the activities mentioned above, the academic cooperation agreement provided the solid institutional framework upon which concrete steps could be taken towards achieving this objective<sup>(17)</sup>.

During the author's visit to UiT in January 2015 he received a demonstration of UiT's

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(16) Caused by the decline in the overall population mentioned earlier.

(17) The following discussion addresses the sequence of events which led to the start of the intensive course in Education, Development and Peace at UiT that began on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017. An analysis of the actual delivery of the course, the results achieved and the difficulties encountered during this process will be presented in a subsequent paper.

impressive international video-conferencing facilities<sup>(18)</sup>. The thinking at that time was that if Toyo were to install similar facilities at one or more of its campuses, then (taking into consideration the time difference of seven hours between Norway and Japan) at a later date Vambheim and he could deliver jointly taught modules or even a full course in Peace Studies. Following consultation with colleagues on his return to Japan, the author came to the realisation that for a number of reasons - most notably the probable sizable budget outlay that this would require, this approach was not likely to prove successful. By contrast, an approach which appeared to offer a greater chance of success was to follow the model pioneered by Professors Takahashi and Tanaka in their respective intensive courses delivered in London and Munich since 2013 and 2015 respectively;<sup>(19)</sup> *ergo* that the author actually escort a group of Toyo students to Tromsø and support Vambheim in the delivery of a comparable intensive course that would be taught at UiT. With this goal in mind, the author conducted a number of informal consultations with senior Law Faculty colleagues during the spring semester of 2015.

During Vambheim's second visit to Toyo in October 2015 more concrete discussions were held with a view to realising the goal of the creation of a new intensive course in Peace Studies at UiT along the lines of the programmes already underway in London and Munich. On behalf of UiT, Vambheim expressed the willingness of his colleagues at the Centre of Peace Studies to host a group of Toyo students, and outlined a draft course of study for their stay in Tromsø. A provisional date of February 2017 was proposed for the first cycle of the new programme. Subsequently, over the course of the next few months a number of administrative procedures were carried out on the Toyo side before the formal proposal to create a new course was approved by the Law Faculty's professors' meeting towards the end of the Spring semester of 2016.

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(18) By means of these facilities academic staff at UiT deliver lectures and conduct seminars with students located at other campuses of the Arctic University of Norway in different parts of the north of the country.

The facilities are also used to facilitate various types of meetings with partners located outside Norway.

(19) Mentioned in section 2 above.



Following this development, detailed preparations for the first cycle of the new course began in earnest.

In conversations between Vambheim and the author, in consultation with their colleagues in the respective administrations of both universities carried out via e-mail and Skype during the summer months, decisions were taken in relation to a number of essential issues pertaining to the new course. These decisions related to the timing and overall length of the course, the number of students who would participate in it, travel to and from Tromsø, accommodation, the educational content of the course, the teaching method to be employed and the overall cost. In a relatively short period of time agreement was reached that the course should last for three weeks and should consist of two weeks of study at UiT followed by a residential excursion to Finnmark County in the far north of Norway to visit the region inhabited by the indigenous Sami population<sup>(20)</sup>. The teaching at UiT was to consist of lectures delivered by Vambheim in English each morning followed by seminars to discuss the content of these lectures led by the author in Japanese each afternoon<sup>(21)</sup>. A target number of ten participating students was agreed and following negotiations with a travel agent in Tokyo the total cost of the course was set at 300,000 yen<sup>(22)</sup>.

During the autumn semester of 2016 in cooperation with the administrative staff of the Law Faculty (教務課) the author sought actively to recruit students to the course, particularly from current and former students of his Fundamental Concepts of Peace Studies course<sup>(23)</sup>. Once a number of students had confirmed their intention to participate, a series of guidance sessions were held from November to January. In these

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(20) The actual dates of the 2017 programme were from February 10<sup>th</sup> to March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

(21) The morning lectures given by Vambheim were delivered for both the participants of the course and for regular UiT students.

(22) Due to the fact that university education is free of charge in Norway this cost was less than that for the Law Faculty's other intensive programmes in London and Munich. Some complications were subsequently to arise with respect to this overall cost which will be explained in section 6 below.

sessions the author gave introductory explanations of the Scandinavian region and the indigenous Sami population, and also presented general information about UiT and the city of Tromsø. Explanations of the required documentation were provided by faculty administrative staff and information pertaining to the travel to and from Norway was provided by a representative of the travel agent. During this period a number of not inconsequential difficulties emerged vis-à-vis the final preparations for the course which will be discussed in the following section.

## 6 . Stumbling blocks during the final preparation process

A number of rounds of discussions between the author and Professor Vambheim and subsequently between academic and administrative colleagues at the two universities had culminated in a situation where by July 2016 a decision was formally taken to proceed with the first cycle of a new intensive course in Peace Studies at UiT in the following February. As this process had originally begun in rather vague terms in September 2012, it could be argued that it had proved to be a protracted and complicated one. There is some truth to this contention, especially with regard to the lengthy negotiations which led to the signing of the academic cooperation agreement in May 2014. However, the author holds that despite the occurrence of numerous delays and bureaucratic difficulties, during this process there was never a stage where the initiative as a whole was in danger of failing to reach a positive conclusion. In a similar respect, during the final period of preparation for the first round of the February 2017 course, and in particular the period between mid-October 2016 until near the end of the year, a number of issues arose which caused not insignificant difficulties for parties on

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(23) The author would like to take this opportunity to express his heartfelt thanks to the administrative staff (教務課) of the Law Faculty without whose invaluable support this course would not have taken place. In addition, the author would like to extend his profound gratitude for the great cooperation and support received over many years from the Chief Administrator of the Centre for Peace Studies at UiT, Ms. Elisabeth Sandersen.

both the Toyo and UiT sides. In stating this the author wishes to stress that there was not a time when he feared that the course would not actually take place, but he accepts that these issues were in danger of threatening the overall level of success that could potentially be achieved.

The first significant difficulty that emerged related to whether a sufficient number of Toyo students would decide to participate in the course. In consultations with faculty staff during the spring of 2016 an understanding was reached that a minimum of five students was required for the course to go ahead. The reasons for this were that if there were less than this number, it would not be possible to secure a cheaper group fare from a travel agent to cover the costs of travel and accommodation. Furthermore, it would be problematic for the faculty to justify the expenditure required to cover the costs incurred by the author as programme coordinator (including travel, accommodation, insurance and living expenses) as well as the additional bureaucratic burden that would fall upon faculty administrative staff. The decision relating to this minimum number of participating students was communicated to UiT colleagues in the late spring and was accepted.

Prior to the start of the autumn semester, the author was concerned that this issue might prove a major obstacle to the enterprise as a whole, and it took on added urgency once concerted publicity for the course began at the beginning of October 2016. The author's principal difficulty in respect of publicising the course was that due to this being the first occasion that such a programme had been organised, he was not in a position to provide specific, detailed explanations of precisely how the course would proceed following the students' arrival in Tromsø<sup>(24)</sup>. Despite this disadvantageous situation, during October a number of students which quickly exceeded the five person minimum expressed interest in participating in the course, and by the end of the month a total of eight students had confirmed their participation of whom five were female and three male.

The second difficulty related to the documentation required by UiT to register the

students into its official system for international students. It goes without saying that following the first guidance session which took place in early November, the eight students who had confirmed their participation submitted a series of documents to the administrative staff of the Law Faculty. This included information relating to their next of kin who could be contacted in case of emergency, an application for travel insurance and a personal pledge committing each student to behave in an honourable and professional manner as ambassadors of Toyo University for the full duration of the course. In addition to these documents, the students also submitted an application form to UiT in English which included their personal information, the name and address of their home university, the course they would be studying and its duration; this application form carried the names and signatures of the Dean of the Law Faculty and the author as faculty and programme coordinators respectively<sup>(25)</sup>. Once these English application forms had been submitted, the author found himself under the mistaken impression that it would not be necessary to submit any additional documentation to UiT. However, a month later (in December 2016) he learned that UiT also required official university transcripts in English for each student which needed to be printed on official Toyo University paper bearing the seal of the university President. Producing these additional documents at short notice at the end of the calendar year was to prove highly problematic and was the cause of considerable consternation for staff on both the Toyo and UiT sides<sup>(26)</sup>.

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(24) This lack of precise knowledge on the author's part related to many important aspects of the course. This included the nature of the accommodation and facilities available at the hotel, the delivery of the lectures and seminars - particularly relating to how the educational content of both would fit together, the locations to be visited on the residential excursion and the extra-curricular activities that would be available to the students. The author would like to state that it is a credit to the students who participated in the February 2017 course that they took the decision to participate in it despite him being unable to provide precise information about these matters prior to departure from Japan.

(25) After these application forms had been completed by the students and signed by the members of staff they were scanned to create pdf files which were then sent to UiT by e-mail.

The third difficulty related to a development which came about late in the preparation process whereby four students from another of UiT's Japanese institutional partners, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS)<sup>(27)</sup>, came on board to participate in the course. In this case, due to the fact that these students were scheduled to travel to and from Tromsø on different flights from their Toyo counterparts and would be unaccompanied by a member of TUFS staff, and also that they had not participated in the series of pre-course guidance sessions held at Toyo, the author was concerned both for their physical wellbeing during the outward and return journeys and their educational preparation for the course that they would be studying at UiT<sup>(28)</sup>.

An additional minor difficulty related to the method of payment utilised for the excursion to Finnmark which was scheduled to take place during the final week of the course. As previously mentioned, the total price agreed with the travel agent and then quoted to the students during the publicity process was 300, 000 yen. However, due to the fact that the exact schedule for the excursion was not finalised with partners in Finnmark until towards the end of 2016, this price did not include possible additional costs that this activity could incur. As a result, once the costs had become clear, the participating students were requested to pay an additional 50, 000 yen, and this payment was made directly to UiT and not through the travel agent<sup>(29)</sup>.

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(26) More will be said in relation to this issue in section 7 below.

(27) Mentioned above in section 3.

(28) As events transpired, the four students from TUFS were able to travel to and from Tromsø without incident and their participation in the course considerably enhanced its overall success on a number of levels. This issue will be discussed in the forthcoming paper which will focus on the actual delivery of the course and the results that were achieved.

(29) With regard to this difficulty, in a similar vein to the author's lack of precise knowledge about the minutiae of the course mentioned earlier in this section and in note 22, it is clear that it came about due to the fact that the course was taking place for the first time and that the partners on all sides were consistently seeking to find the most effective means of facilitating the most successful outcome.

## 7 . Discussion: results achieved and lessons learned

This section is divided into two parts. The first part elucidates the author's view regarding how the two developments carried out in partnership with the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø represent meaningful contributions towards the internationalization of the Faculty of Law at Toyo University. The second part elucidates lessons that have been learned as a result of the cycle of interactions carried out with partners at UiT, particularly with regard to the difficulties described in the previous section.

### Part 1 - Results achieved

This paper began with an explanation of the challenging general situation facing universities in Japan and some of the measures being taken to address this on the part of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), in particular the Global 30 Project and its successor the Top Global University Project (TGUP). It also described how Japanese universities are facing increasing pressure to promote internationalization within their institutions, particularly the 37 universities selected in 2014 for the TGUP, with internationalization being defined as concrete steps being taken towards achieving the ten common performance indicators for this condition as stipulated by MEXT<sup>(30)</sup>. The author has stated his contention that the signing of an academic cooperation agreement with the Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education at UiT in May 2014 and the delivery of an intensive course in Education, Development and Peace at UiT in February - March 2017 represent meaningful contributions towards the internationalization of the Law Faculty at Toyo University, particularly with regard to the MEXT performance indicators numbers 2, 3 and 4. To illustrate this, a description will be provided of the

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(30) Listed in section 2 above.

tangible results that have been achieved by these developments in line with each of the three performance indicators (referred to below as PIs).

*PI 2. Increase the ratio of international students in the total student population.*

At the time of writing<sup>(31)</sup>, as a result of the signing of the academic agreement in May 2014 the number of students from UiT who have or are currently conducting their studies at Toyo amounts to zero. The reason that the author holds that concrete progress has been made towards achieving this performance indicator is that as the result of supplementary negotiations carried out between the two universities during 2017, the agreement which currently links one faculty each at Toyo and UiT will soon be promoted to a whole institution agreement which will cover all faculties at both institutions<sup>(32)</sup>. As a consequence, it is expected that in line with this new agreement from the autumn semester of 2018 two or more students from UiT will commence a period of study at Toyo during which they may study courses that are offered in English within the Law Faculty.

*PI 3. Increase the ratio of students who have earned credits at foreign universities in the total Japanese student population.*

As the intensive course delivered at UiT in February - March 2017 represented a pilot project undertaken in line with the fourth area of cooperation promoted by the faculty agreement concluded between Toyo and UiT in 2014<sup>(33)</sup>, the course did not offer credits which the participating students could use to count towards their degrees at

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(31) This paper was written in September 2017.

(32) The signing of a whole institution agreement is scheduled to take place at Toyo University's Hakusan Campus on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2017 by the Vice-Rector of the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Professor Wenche Jakobsen, and the President of Toyo University, Professor Makio Takemura.

(33) Area of cooperation promoted under the 2014 inter-faculty agreement, number 4: "Any other additional activities or projects that are deemed appropriate and are designed and implemented with the full agreement and participation of faculty members from both institutions." See section 4 above.

Toyo. However, as a result of the successful completion of the course in March 2017 and once again the forthcoming signing of a whole institution agreement between the two institutions, representatives of both sides have stated their intention that in subsequent cycles the course will offer credits to its participating students.

PI 4. *Increase the number of students sent abroad under inter-university agreements.*

This performance indicator is easier to quantify: as a result of the May 2014 agreement, eight students from the Law Faculty, five female and three male, studied a three week intensive course in Education, Development and Peace at UiT from February 10<sup>th</sup> to March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017.

Due to the fact that measurable progress has thus far only been achieved in line with performance indicator 4 and that what has been described here regarding indicators 2 and 3 effectively amounts to only *potential* for future progress, it may be argued that the case for meaningful contributions having been made towards the internationalization of the Law Faculty appears fairly weak. However, the author contends that a drive towards internationalization within a higher education institution and the faculties within it necessarily represents a lengthy and ongoing process, and therefore that positive incremental steps which are taken in cooperation with external institutional partners such as those described in this paper certainly contribute towards the achievement of this long-term goal.

## Part 2 - Lessons learned

Firstly, to address the difficulties described in section 6 which arose during the final months of preparation for the new course. A degree of commonality can be discerned here in the sense that to a large extent these difficulties came about due to the fact that the programme was in its first year, and that despite the best efforts of the organisers and supporting staff on both the UiT and Toyo sides, not all eventualities could have been predicted.



It can be argued that the first difficulty relating to the potential number of course participants in the new programme from the Toyo side was in some sense unavoidable. In order for the programme to go ahead and achieve the greatest level of success, it goes without saying that several members of staff on both sides made every effort to develop a course that would be stimulating and attractive to potential participants and sought to provide them with as much detail as possible about the various educational, domestic and travel arrangements. However, as there was clearly no direct experience to call upon, these efforts unfortunately did come up short in some areas, particularly on the author's part. For subsequent cycles, it is therefore a given that the considerable amount of written, photographic and video material and more importantly personal experience that has amassed prior to and during the 2017 course will be utilised to ensure a smoother preparatory process and ultimately an enhanced overall educational outcome. With regard to the issue of the additional documentation required by UiT to register the incoming students, in a similar respect to the publicity issue, as the organisers on the Toyo side are now cognisant of the fact that formal academic transcripts in English will be required by UiT for each participant, it is predicted that it will be a far more straightforward task to produce and submit these in good time in order to complete the necessary administrative procedures.

Regarding the addition to the programme of the four students from TUFS, the author was initially surprised by this development and as has been stated was concerned for their safety during the journeys and for their educational preparation for the course. However, it is not in doubt that their participation was to prove a highly beneficial development to the initiative as a whole, both educationally and socially. As a consequence, in tri-party negotiations held between UiT, Toyo and TUFS in the weeks following the end of the course, a decision was taken to continue TUFS students' participation in subsequent cycles, and furthermore that this cooperation should be systematized on the Japanese side by means of an academic agreement concluded between Toyo and TUFS<sup>(34)</sup>. In order to obviate the author's concerns which arose vis-

à-vis the TUFS students' participation in the 2017 programme, for forthcoming cycles it has been agreed that future participants from TUFS will attend the all of the pre-course guidance sessions along with their Toyo counterparts and will also travel together with them on the same flights to and from Tromsø.

With regard to the final difficulty mentioned in section 6 relating to the payment for the excursion to Finnmark, due to the fact that the sites to be visited, the locations for meals and accommodation as well as the travel between these locations have now been largely determined by partners on the UiT side, it is expected that the method and timing of payment should now become more straightforward. It will likely be possible to include the costs of this excursion in the overall price quoted to students during the forthcoming publicity process and subsequently utilise the functions of the travel agent to carry out this payment transaction.

The final comments made in this paper will concern three additional lessons that have been learned as a result of the process of interaction with partners at UiT and how other universities in Japan can potentially benefit from experience gained from this course of events. The author makes no claims that the points below are in any way unique or ground-breaking, but he is of the opinion that they illustrate approaches through which cooperation undertaken with external academic partners can be facilitated in a generally mutually-beneficial manner.

The first point relates to the importance of establishing a relationship of trust and goodwill with external partners. It is clear that developing such a relationship requires consistent time and effort, but it can be said to be essential in order to create a personal and professional environment which is conducive to the facilitation of international cooperation at the higher education level. One could almost go as far as to say that if this is present then within reason there are few obstacles that cannot be overcome, and

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(34) It is likely that this academic cooperation agreement will be concluded between Toyo and TUFS before the end of 2017.

conversely if this is not present then there is little likelihood that any meaningful results can be achieved<sup>(35)</sup>. In order to develop this relationship, frequent communication is naturally required between the parties in order to confirm shared goals and the most appropriate means of achieving them. Furthermore, this communication should take into consideration the variety of local responsibilities and pressures which are incumbent on an external party, as well as the potential for differing norms of personal or professional behaviour to create misunderstandings which could undermine future progress.

Secondly, with regard to one's home institution, the importance of securing consistent support from academic and administrative colleagues should also be emphasized. It is not in doubt that facilitating meaningful cooperation with external partners is by nature a complex and time-consuming process, albeit a highly rewarding one in circumstances where positive results are achieved. However, if efforts to establish lasting research or educational cooperation with external partners fail to fall in line with broader faculty or whole institution priorities at the home university, then ultimately it is unlikely that they will succeed.

Thirdly, it is important to appreciate that even in highly conducive professional environments in which strong relationships have been established with external partners and solid backing secured from a variety of colleagues at home, it is not uncommon for difficulties, misunderstandings and setbacks to still occur. Endeavours which seek to facilitate new educational initiatives in institutional environments wherein no such activities have hitherto taken place clearly represent demanding professional challenges. In such circumstances, over and above essential tasks such as creating courses of study, specific curricula, reading lists and deciding upon appropriate

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(35) With respect to this, the author would like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to his inspirational leading partner at UiT Professor Vidar Vambheim, and express his continued commitment towards any and all future cooperation carried out between the Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø and Toyo University.

teaching methods, new programme organisers must also come to terms with a number of other potentially significant obstacles. On an interpersonal level this could include language barriers, differing cultural norms and overall educational expectations, and on an institutional level, bureaucratic barriers, differing administrative cultures and professional competencies. As a consequence, the author holds that in such endeavours it is important to maintain a realistic perspective of what can ultimately be achieved and what perhaps cannot. Therefore, keeping in mind the fact that some restrictions will continue to exist and setbacks occur, in circumstances where personal and professional relationships are strong, goals and strategies are clear and institutional commitment has been demonstrated on both sides, much can and should be ventured in order to achieve what is of course the most fundamental goal - that of delivering the greatest possible educational benefit to the students of all the participating institutions.

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